

South Dakota National Guard

Public Affairs Office

Phone: 605-737-6721 Email: ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil Web: sd.ng.mil



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 26, 2016

Society of American Indian Government Employees presents award to SD Guardsman

CATOOSA, Okla. – The Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) presented their Military Meritorious Service Award to a South Dakota Army National Guard Soldier, June 9, during the 13th Annual SAIGE National Training Conference in Catoosa, Oklahoma.

Master Sgt. James Dean Bad Wound, of Rapid City, received the Military Meritorious Service Award, which honors military members and Department of Defense civilian employees who have supported the DoD mission, overseas contingency operations, or whose attributes best epitomized the qualities and core values of their respective Military Service or other DoD Component.

Bad Wound, a member of Joint Force Headquarters, has served on the South Dakota National Guard Diversity Council for the past 10 years, spearheading many projects assisting in relationships with the SDNG and Native American communities in South Dakota.

Most recently, Bad Wound served as chairman of the Native American Heritage Month - Oceti Sakowin Code Talker Celebration Subcommittee of the SDNG Diversity Council.

The subcommittee developed the idea of honoring Native American veterans by focusing on the code talker legacy, which was largely unknown in South Dakota, the National Guard and even the nine tribes located within the boundaries of the state.

“He led the committee as it formed, created and put on four ceremonies honoring code talker veterans from the nine Native American tribes located in South Dakota,” said 1st Lt. Carstin Jerzak, SDNG state equal employment manager. “He devoted his personal time and many hours to ensuring the celebrations depicted the history of the code talker legacy and honored veterans.”

The honoring ceremonies, included a traveling exhibit featuring bronze replicas of the gold Congressional Medallions presented to each tribe in honor of the veterans from the tribe that served as code talkers during World War I and World War II.

Additionally, the ceremonies featured guest speakers from the SDNG who spoke on the code talker legacy and tribal affiliation, and family members of code talker veterans who spoke of their family member and their legacy.

In addition to Bad Wound, the SDNG also nominated Chief Warrant Officer 4 William White and Master Sgt. Edith Clemmons for the SAIGE Military Meritorious Service Award.

White and Clemmons, who worked alongside Bad Wound on the Code Talker Celebration Subcommittee, were both finalists for the award.

“These three individuals worked countless hours to personally ensure the veterans, tribes and code talker legacy was honored in a manner that was respectful and highlighted the duty, honor and selfless service of
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the code talker legacy, heritage and language,” said Jerzak. “Their dedication to their heritage and families was evident in the respectful manner they displayed towards all personnel whom attended and they are to be commended for bringing forth awareness of this heroic and important part of heritage, not just for Native American people, but for all Americans.”

In total, six service members and civilians received the award, and three represented the National Guard from South Dakota, Connecticut and Oklahoma.

“It has been an honor to serve in the South Dakota National Guard for the past 29 years,” said Bad Wound, who retired on April 30. “I have had many proud moments. The South Dakota National Guard helped me succeed in being able to serve my country and my family.

“I look forward to assisting Native American youth in joining the South Dakota National Guard and furthering their education.”

SAIGE is a national non-profit organization advocating for American Indian and Alaska Native people in the government workforce by providing them the necessary tools in their efforts to reach their full potential.

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High resolution photos are available at www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard



160609-Z-ZZ999-001: U.S. Army Master Sgt. James Dean Badwound, South Dakota Army National Guard, receives the 2016 Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) Military Meritorious Service Award in Catoosa, Oklahoma, June 9, 2016, during the 13th Annual SAIGE National Training Conference. The SAIGE Military Meritorious Service Award honors military members and Department of Defense civilian employees, men and women, who have supported the DoD mission, overseas contingency operations, or whose attributes best epitomized the qualities and core values of their respective Military Service or other DoD Component. (Oklahoma Army National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Leanna Litsch)



160609-Z-ZZ999-003: Recipients of the 2016 Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) Military Meritorious Service Award stand together in Catoosa, Oklahoma, June 9, 2016, during the 13th Annual SAIGE National Training Conference. The SAIGE Military Meritorious Service Award honors military members and Department of Defense civilian employees, men and women, who have supported the DoD mission, overseas contingency operations, or whose attributes best epitomized the qualities and core values of their respective Military Service or other DoD Component. (Oklahoma Army National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Leanna Litsch)



U.S. Army Master Sgt. James Dean Badwound, South Dakota Army National Guard (South Dakota Army National Guard photo)

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Maj. Anthony Deiss at (605) 737-6721 or cell (605) 431-8753, or e-mail ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil